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FM AMEMBASSY DAKAR
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4498
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 0160
RUEHLC/AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE 0853
RUEHLI/AMEMBASSY LISBON 0709
RUEHLU/AMEMBASSY LUANDA 0363
RUEHTO/AMEMBASSY MAPUTO 0395

UNCLAS DAKAR 000587

SIPDIS

SIPDIS
SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR AF/W, AF/RSA, INL, DRL/PHD AND INR/AA
AID/W FOR AFR/WA
ACCRA FOR USAID/WARP
LISBON ALSO FOR DAO
PARIS FOR POL - D'ELIA

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: GUINEA-BISSAU: GOVERNMENT PROGRAM UNDER
CONSIDERATION; ANTI-CORRUPTION EFFORTS UNDERWAY

REF: DAKAR 0239

GOVERNMENT'S PROGRAM STILL ALIVE

¶11. (U) The National Popular Assembly (ANP) voted to schedule the Government's policy program for discussion, overturning a technical advisory board's decision, which tried to keep the program from being read by the full Assembly. Fifty-one parliamentarians voted in favor, thirty-four against, and four abstained in the vote. Members are now reading the program and will deliberate and vote on approval later this month. Approval of the program would be a major accomplishment for President Vieira and his embattled Prime Minister, Aristides Gomes, who the leadership of the fractured Party for the Independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde (PAIGC) continues to denounce as an unconstitutional appointment despite a Supreme Court ruling to the contrary (Reftel).

ANTI-CORRUPTION EFFORTS

¶12. (U) The Prime Minister sacked Justice Minister Dr. Namuano Dias on March 3 and replaced him with Dr. Braima Dafe to keep on track the corruption trial of Rene Barros, the former head of the state Electric and Water Company. Barros is accused of misappropriating about USD 79,000 (43 million CFA). Dias protested the detention of Barros, and threatened to hold up the trial, claiming there was no presumption of innocence.

¶13. (U) Other anti-corruption efforts moving forward include three separate trials that were opened by the previous Prime Minister, Carlos Gomes Jr. of the PAIGC. The current Prime Minister has reopened the cases, despite the fact that two of the three campaigned heavily for President Vieira.

¶14. (SBU) COMMENT: With the recent visit of the World Bank to Bissau and an upcoming International Monetary Fund visit, it appears Vieira and Aristides Gomes are taking steps the international community wants to see with respect to anti-corruption efforts, even if it means going after their own supporters. END COMMENT.

JACKSON